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ABSTRACT

In order to identify and analyze the reasons for termination among Jewish day school principals in the United States during the period 1980-85, two self-designed questionnaires were distributed, one for school principals and the other for board presidents. A total of 233 principals and 114 board presidents responded to the questionnaires. A Statistical Analysis System was used on the survey data with the following procedures: frequency, anova, and Linear Regression. The views of the principals and board presidents concerning the four most important reasons for termination were found to be similar. The reasons are relations with the board, career and advancement, competency, and financial reasons. Three tables and nine references are appended. (Author/KM)

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REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF PRINCIPALS

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Reasons for Termination of Principals

Abstract

In order to identify and analyze the reasons for termination among Jewish Day School Principals in the United States during the period 1980-1985, two self-designed questionnaires were distributed, one for school principals and the other for board presidents. There were 233 principals and 114 board presidents who responded to the questionnaires. A Statistical Analysis System was used on the survey data with the following procedures: frequency, anova and Linear Regression. The views of the principals and board presidents concerning the four most important reasons for termination were found to be similar. The reasons are: financial reasons, relations with board, career and advancement, and competency.

Introduction

The National Association of Elementary School Principals conducted five national surveys and issued reports in 1928, 1948, 1958, 1968 and 1978 on the elementary school principal. The results of the five studies reflect the changing status of the elementary school principal as

well as the changing concerns of those who occupy the position.

Principals' responses in the 1978 survey indicate that:

1. Collective bargaining is having a pronounced effect on how the schools are run.

2. The pressures perceived by the principals stem from their lack of influence on school district decisions that affect elementary schools and elementary education.

3. Principals also note an increased influence of superintendent in evaluation and in determining salaries.

Crosby (1972) concluded his study in a summary of major findings. Budget defeats, socioeconomic status, teacher activity, population stability, board of education stability and political party activity all contributed to make the environment fertile for superintendent termination. Bentley (1976), Dawson (1983) noted unsatisfactory board relations and poor support. Paolillo (1982) noted low salaries, greater pressures and not adequately prepared to deal with educational planning, program evaluation and performance appraisal. A problem with most of the studies is that termination rates are reported but the reasons for

termination are commonly neglected.

Schiff (1974) summarized the development of the Jewish Day School and its leadership as follows:

School administration is increasingly becoming a critical problem in the day school. The turnover of lay and professional leadership is uncomfortably rapid. During the last ten years, about 150 changes in directorship and principalship positions have taken place. Such a large change of leadership in the 350 schools is certainly a phenomenon which calls for further investigation.

Methodology and Instrumentation

The population of this study consisted entirely of principals and presidents of Jewish day schools in the United States serving during the academic year of 1985-1986. The instruments used in this survey were two almost identical questionnaires, one for principals and one for presidents. Each questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A of the questionnaire was entitled "Reasons for Changing Previous Positions."

Section B of the questionnaire was entitled "Demographic Data," and included three secondary components.

A secondary component was composed of several questions and was designed to describe the personal characteristics of the principal and the president and to give information about the school.

Principals' and board presidents' perceptions of the most important reasons for termination were derived by analysis of the last question from Section A. The question states: In your opinion, why do the Jewish Day School principals change positions? Please write the four most important reasons.

Results

Principals and board presidents wrote their views concerning the four most important reasons for termination. those respondents involved in this study selected a total of more than 1,000 reasons. Some participants did not select four reasons in each and every case. The responses were evaluated and divided into 20 categories. Groups of similar answers are represented by a single title. The titles were numbered 1 through 20. The four reasons written in the questionnaires were numbered and coded in the order given, indicating degree of importance. Details of reasons and

their related categories will be found in Appendix A.

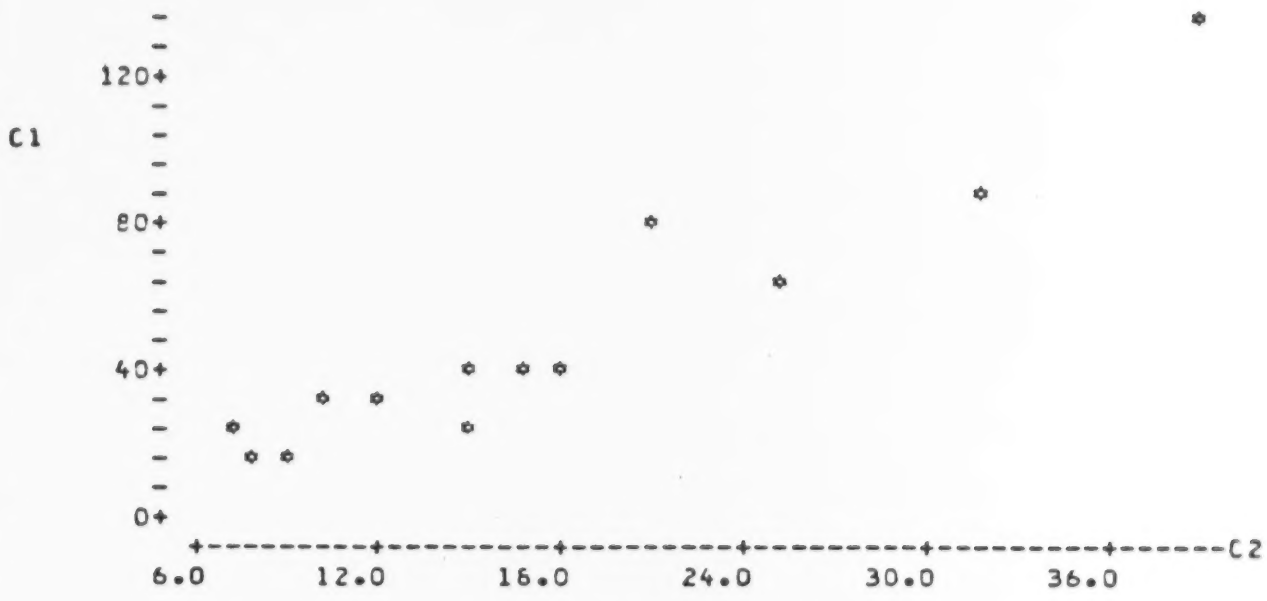
Table 1 presents the data given by the principals and the board presidents with regard to their views concerning the four most important reasons for termination. The reasons selected most often by the principals were the same as those selected by the board presidents. No significant difference was found in the order of the reasons or in the percentage given to each reason. Twelve reasons that were given high percentage by the respondents were selected and put in rank order, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 indicates that a slight difference was found on all the reasons between principals and board presidents. The difference between the two groups of respondents on the financial reasons was slightly higher.

The 13 major reasons were tested with regression analysis for significant difference between the principals and board presidents. Table 3 presents statistical data which were processed with the test analysis. C1 represents data given by the principals. C2 represents data given by the board presidents.

The standard deviation of C1 about the regression line of C1 = 10.90; C2 = 3.056.

R-squared 90.8% and r-squared adjusted for D.F. is 89.9%. The tests show a significantly high positive correlation of the reasons given by the principals and the board presidents. Approximately 90% of the variation observed in the principals' frequency response is associated with the variation in the board presidents' response.



Scattergram of four most important reasons given by principals and board presidents.

The scattergram shows linear regression and correlation of the given data by principals and board presidents. One unusual observation was found in the given data (C1 = 136; C2 = 39) and had a little influence on the significance of the correlation. The meaning of this positive correlation is that the 13 most important reasons selected by principals are identical to the reasons given by board presidents.

Discussion

Why does a high degree of termination exist in Jewish day schools? The causal factors that have been cited as affecting termination identify some of the problems that influence principals to change their position or terminate their contracts. In discussing this issue, one may speculate that it is related to the unique system of the Jewish day school. These schools, as private institutions, are not governed by a national organization or by one type of leadership. Undefined instructions and regulations and involvement of board members and parents create an unstable situation in these schools. Elmaleh (1987) found that the termination rate for the period 1980 to 1985 was between 60 and 70 percent. School principals reported a termination rate of 20% for 1984/1985 and board presidents reported a 32.7% termination rate. This termination rate was high enough during the five-year period to make it statistically possible to replace two-thirds of the principal population.

From the literature as from this study, lack of competency was found to be highly related to termination in the principalship. Board presidents view leadership,

decision-making, and planning as major priorities in the qualifications of administrators. In determining the relationship between principals' perception and presidents' perception of the reasons for termination, the following were found:

a) principals and board presidents have the same perception regarding the following variables: community reasons; being criticized by the board, teachers and parents; creativity of the position; lack of independence; and working conditions.

b) principals and board presidents have different perceptions of and principals indicated higher importance on the following reasons: opportunities for career advancement and prestigious position, family responsibilities and education for children, prospect of additional or increased leadership and advancement in a new position, job security, tenure and stability.

Principals and board presidents agreed on the four most important reasons for termination: financial reasons, relations with board, career and advancement, and competency (shown in table 2). The order of the reasons given was also

similar. Although no one variable seemed to be primarily responsible for principal termination, each factor seemed to contribute to a total picture in which executive termination could readily occur. The earliest literature describing some reasons for termination or turnover is McConnel's dissertation in 1971. The reasons he stated were: a) unfair or unsatisfactory district administrative relationship, b) promotion to a more desirable position within the district, c) unsatisfactory working conditions related to job tension, d) transfer to another district to obtain a more desirable position, e) unsatisfactory school board relations. The reasons found in the present study differ significantly from those in McConnel's study. However, recent studies revealed the following primary reasons: Bentley (1976) found that boards of education interfere to an excessive degree in administrative affairs; Paolillo (1982) reported on low salaries; Dawson (1983) and Dalton (1984) reported on unsatisfactory board relations. These studies concluded that poor relations between the board and the principals create conflicts which impair school effectiveness. If the board and the principal are to

work together cooperatively, they must establish and understand the role that each plays in the operation of a school system. A clear understanding is essential for the successful operation of the school.

Table [1]

Four Most Important Reasons for Termination Stated by Principals and Board Presidents

Reasons	Board Presidents						Principals					
	1	2	3	4	Tot.	%	1	2	3	4	Tot.	%
Relationship with Board	9	8	10	5	32	14.	40	27	16	4	87	13.6
Financial Reasons	15	10	9	5	39	17.1	47	42	29	18	136	21.3
Career and Advancement	6	15	2	2	25	11.	16	13	21	15	65	10.2
Relationship with Parents	2	3	3	2	10	4.4	7	12	12	4	35	5.5
Stress-Pressure	4	3	4	1	12	5.3	7	8	9	9	33	5.2
Excessive Work	-	1	2	-	3	1.3	5	2	6	1	14	2.2
Working Conditions	3	5	4	3	15	6.6	5	16	12	8	41	6.4
Competency	7	2	4	5	18	7.9	14	13	8	7	42	6.6
Community Reasons	2	2	6	5	15	6.6	3	10	4	9	26	4.1
Politics	-	-	-	-	-	0	8	6	2	3	20	3.1
Personal Reasons	4	2	6	5	17	7.4	6	6	18	11	41	6.4
Job Satisfaction	4	-	-	3	7	3.0	9	3	6	4	22	3.4
School Climate	-	2	1	-	3	1.3	3	1	7	5	16	2.5
Previous Work	4	-	1	-	5	2.2	-	1	1	1	3	.5
Challenging Position	-	5	2	2	9	3.9	1	1	4	9	15	2.3
Discontent Parents	1	1	1	1	4	1.8	-	2	3	3	8	1.3
Retirement	1	-	-	-	1	.4	-	1	-	1	2	.3
Job Security	-	-	-	1	1	.4	3	2	1	7	13	2.0
Burnout	1	2	2	3	8	3.5	2	5	3	8	18	2.8
Authority	1	-	1	2	4	1.8	1	2	-	-	3	.5
Totals	64	61	58	45	228		177	174	162	127	640	

Table 2

Principals' and Board Presidents' Perceptions of the Four Most Important Reasons for Termination

	Principals		Board Presidents	
easons	Number	%	Number	%
inancial Reasons	136	21.3	39	17.1
elations with Board	87	13.6	32	14.0
areer & Advancement	65	10.2	25	11.0
ompetency	42	6.6	18	7.9
ersonal Reasons	41	6.4	17	7.4
orking Conditions	41	6.4	15	6.6
ommunity Reasons	26	4.1	15	6.6
tress-Pressure	33	5.2	12	5.3
elations with Parents	35	5.5	10	4.4
hallenging Position	15	2.3	9	3.9
urnout	18	2.8	8	3.5
ob Satisfaction	22	3.4	7	3.0
thers	79	12.2	21	9.3
	640	100.0	228	100.0

Table 3

Statistical Data for Linear Regression*

(* Regression Equations are: C1 = -10.4 + 3.40 C2
C2 = 4.39 + 0.267 C1)

Test for	Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T-ratio
C1	Constant	-10.391	6.480	-1.60
	C2	3.3995	0.3268	10.40
C2	Constant	4.393	1.521	2.89
	C1	0.2670	0.0256	10.40

Analysis of Variance

	Source	DF	SS	MS=SS/DF
C1	Regression	1	12865	12865
	Error	11	1307	119
	Total	12	14172	
C2	Regression	1	1010.5	1010.5
	Error	11	102.7	9.3
	Total	12	1113.2	

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General Comments from Principals and Board Presidents Regarding Reasons for Termination

Principal

- Constant change of Board of Education and President
- Personality conflict with officers
- Whim of Board, unsophisticated board, poor support
- Personal growth, status, to further career
- Pressure and harassment from parents
- Parents are too choosy
- Parental interference in school policy
- Stress and pressure of the job
- Problems with powerful individuals, too much paper work, life style inconvenience
- Unrealistic workload and poor working conditions
- Principal's own lack of competence.
- The only way to receive a significant salary increase is to move
- Vulnerability to parental, board, community, and teacher pressures at the same time
- Usually it results from the board of directors feeling the need to accomplish something and utilize their power. This very often expresses itself in calling for a change of the principal.
- All the reasons for termination have to do with lack of respect
- Budgetary problem facing principal and focus on monetary issues instead of education
- hundreds of interesting reasons are found in the observation of Elmaleh (1988)

Board Presidents

- Poor administrative abilities and interpersonal skills
- Principals are not qualified and not competent
- Inability to function in harmony with school board
- The fallacy that Rabbis are educators or are well educated themselves.
- Jewish atmosphere of the community
- Unhappy with community
- Differing religious views
- A volatile job market populated by many incompetents poorly prepared to deal with multiple pressures and intellectual challenges
- Aliah
- The most important reason is that they are denied contract renewals. This is widespread and reflects, to a vast extent, the level of competence and upward mobility of those in the field. Other than that, for those on the rise the main reason, obviously, is to better oneself professionally and financially.
- These were actual reasons for school's dissatisfaction: they refuse (our last two) to be subordinate to anyone for anything; they choose to work only during assigned hours rather than be task-oriented; they were released or "forced to quit" due to very bad tempers, poor interpersonal relations, lack of follow-through. The above pertains to our last two of four principals.

The Most Common Reasons Given by Principals and Board Presidents for Termination, Grouped by Category

1. Relations and conflicts with board
2. Financial reasons
3. Career and prestige advancement
4. Relations with parents
5. Stress/pressure
6. Excessive administration
7. Working conditions
8. Lack of competency
9. Community
10. Politics
11. Personal reasons
12. Job dissatisfaction
13. School climate
14. Problems with previous school
15. Challenging position
16. Complaints of discontented parents
17. Retirement (self-explanatory)
18. Lack of job security
19. Burnout
20. Lack of authority